

## THE STORY OF TWO STERILE SPECIMENS

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In 1943 the United States Forest Service sent a number of men to Costa Rica, assigned to give technical advice to the engineers building the Pan American Highway then being laid out and constructed. As an adjunct to the principal job, botanical material and wood specimens were collected from many timber trees along the route of the highway.

Dr. William A. Dayton wrote up the collection about ten years later (Phytologia **4**: 223-265. 1953) giving those determinations which Paul C. Standley, and others, had provided.

Two of these collections, *Barbour 1016* and *Dayton 3125*, were sterile but were named *Goethalsia meiantha* (Donn.-Sm.) Burret [*Tiliaceae*] by Standley.

Curiously enough H. A. Gleason received a flowering specimen of *Goethalsia* from Colombia (*Lawrance 494*) and came to the conclusion that the genus *Goethalsia* Pittier should have been referred to the *Flacourtiaceae*. He published an emended description (Phytologia **1**: 112. 1934) for the genus, placing it in *Flacourtiaceae*.

Professor Record studied the wood of two collections (Trop. Woods **40**: 18. 1934) and found that the wood suggested *Tiliaceae* and not *Flacourtiaceae*. The following year (Trop. Woods **42**: 21. 1935), Record received additional material and submitted it to Ducke and to Rehder for an opinion. Both thought it to be tiliaceous. In the same number of Tropical Woods, Standley reviewed Burret's "*Goethalsia* Pitt. doch eine Tiliacee, Keine Flacourtiacee" (Fedde. Rep. Sp. Nov. **35**: 195. 1934) in which Burret said that Gleason had misinterpreted the structure of the flower, that the plant was tiliaceous.

Charles Baehni wrote a short paper on the systematic position of *Goethalsia* (Candollea **6**: 44-45. 1935) concluding that it and three other genera normally included in the *Tiliaceae* should be transferred to the *Bixaceae*.

The next appearance in literature is that of Dayton mentioned in the second paragraph of this note, where *Dayton 3125* and *Barbour 1016* are indicated as "Gen. nov. (?)" but it is not quite clear in which family Dayton thought the "Gen. nov. (?)" belonged for he said below that "the leaf characters, including venation correspond with the botanical description of this species, [*Goethalsia meiantha*] and I am perfectly satisfied the material perfectly matches U. S. National Herbarium specimens thus labeled."

Under *Barbour 1016* just below Dayton quotes letters of both Record and Standley which indicate that the specimens belonged in the *Flacourtiaceae*.

Some years later Standley and I published *Hasseltia macroterantha* (Ceiba **3**: 53. 1952) based on collections made by Alexander F. Skutch. I had never seen and knew nothing of the history of the Dayton and Barbour collections and if



Standley recalled having previously worked with specimens like our proposed new species he did not add anything to our account that would reflect this.

In 1961, while revising the *Flacourtiaceae* for the Flora of Guatemala, I studied critically some of the entities in Central America and decided that *Hasseltia macroterantha* Standl. & L. Wms. was not a *Hasseltia* but that it represented an undescribed genus. The name *Macrohasseltia* [*Flacourtiaceae*] was proposed for it.

Dr. B. Francis Kukachka wrote in April 1964 to inquire if I had had occasion to examine some "controversial material" from Costa Rica while studying the *Flacourtiaceae* and mentioned *Barbour 1016* and *Dayton 3125*. He wrote that "the wood . . . is definitely not *Goethalsia* and also neither *Hasseltia* nor *Hasseltiopsis* [= *Pleuranthodendron*] as has been suggested but is certainly a flacourt. . . . To me the wood does not match any of the known genera but belongs in the group."

The "controversial material" was found in the herbarium still as *Goethalsia*. I recognized it as very similar to the recently described *Macrohasseltia*, which it proved to be upon critical examination.

Professor Pittier was a great believer in the usefulness of the *Flacourtiaceae* as a receptacle for all those things not recognized. "When in doubt put it in the *Flacourtiaceae*!" He must have had a strong feeling that his *Goethalsia* was tiliaceous, as in fact most now agree that it is.